

BARCELÓ) for giving this bill their personal attention. It is essential that we expedite enactment of this legislation as these are willing sellers who have extended this offer for only a limited period of time.

Cat Island is a diverse habitat for a wealth of marine life and shore birds and one of the best surf fishing spots on the entire Gulf Coast.

More to the point, Mr. Speaker, Cat Island is, in my opinion, one of the last remaining places on the Mississippi Gulf Coast where one can still see the hand of God. And whether it is a beautiful osprey or a mother dolphin or something as strange-looking as an alligator or a horseshoe crab, it is all part of the hand of God and deserves to be protected. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues for making this possible.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers on this issue, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2541, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROHIBITING OIL AND GAS DRILLING IN MOSQUITO CREEK LAKE IN CORTLAND, OHIO

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2818) to prohibit oil and gas drilling in Mosquito Creek Lake in Cortland, Ohio.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2818

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION.

After the enactment of this Act no person may commence any drilling activity (including any slant or directional drilling) to extract oil or gas from lands beneath waters under the jurisdiction of the United States in Mosquito Creek Lake in Cortland, Ohio. The Attorney General of the United States may bring an action in the appropriate United States district court to enforce the prohibition contained in this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN).

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in somewhat reluctant support of H.R. 2818, a bill to prohibit oil and gas drilling beneath Mosquito Creek Lake in Cortland, Ohio, introduced by the gentleman

from Youngstown, Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

The bill reflects the concerns of some of the gentleman's constituents in Trumbull County, Ohio regarding the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-administered project known as Mosquito Creek Lake for which the Department of the Interior is considering leasing the oil and gas rights beneath this reservoir. The Bureau of Land Management has prepared a planning analysis and environmental analysis in preparation for a decision whether to lease approximately 11,100 acres of minimal estate acquired by the Federal Government when the Corps of Engineers impounded this drainage basin, creating a reservoir about 1 mile wide and 9 miles long.

Nonetheless, local opposition to the BLM proposal remains, primarily, upon concerns of spills and contaminant discharges from drilling upon surface and groundwater resources. However, I will yield to the wishes of the elected House Member from this affected area. He will have to deal with that with his constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2818 was introduced by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) to address concerns raised by his constituents in Trumbull County, Ohio relating to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-administered project known as Mosquito Creek Lake. This area is currently under consideration for development of Federal oil and gas rights beneath the man-made reservoir.

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management field office in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has developed a proposed planning analysis, environmental analysis preparatory to a decision on whether to lease 11,100 acres of mineral estate acquired by the Federal Government when the Corps impounded this drainage basin creating a reservoir about 1 mile wide and 9 miles long.

There are significant oil and gas deposits beneath Mosquito Lake which various entities have expressed desires and interest in developing. Despite stipulations and other safeguards which the BLM and the Corps of Engineers have promised to provide, as well as a long history of oil and gas development in the area, some local residents continue to oppose any new oil and gas activity.

These stipulations are not sufficient to resolve the concerns of the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT), therefore, his bill would bar any person from any drilling activity including slant or directional drilling to extract oil or gas from lands beneath Mosquito

Creek Lake in Cortland, Ohio. Under the bill, the U.S. Attorney General would have the authority to file suit in the U.S. District Court to enforce this prohibition.

Mr. Speaker, the Clinton administration opposes this bill. Not only do they perceive an opportunity to raise Federal revenues through the development of oil and gas resources, they also cannot prevent drainage from surrounding private lands if they do not develop the area beneath Mosquito Creek Lake.

Given these concerns, I have some reservations about the bill. However, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT) has expressed a great desire to see this bill enacted and, since it affects his district, we do not intend to oppose it.

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Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TRAFICANT).

Mr. TRAFICANT. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to speak on a bill that I introduced, and I wanted to make a few comments on H.R. 2818, to ban slant drilling at Mosquito Creek Lake.

Now, I have supported capturing revenues from energy sources offshore and will continue to do so. But, Mr. Speaker, I want to point this out to the House, because this is the beginning of probably a policy discussion on an issue that has become and will become more sensitive.

The Bureau of Land Management wanted to slant drill underneath Mosquito Creek Lake, and that is the sole, primary, and only drinking water for the second largest city in my district of 60,000 people, the city of Warren. The City of Cortland also depends upon it as do the aquifer systems of many small communities in the area.

So it is not as if we are just capturing the revenue, which I want to do and which I support. This is a sole-purpose drinking water lake. I think it is bad policy.

I want to make this point very simply to Congress, water running down hill, and any drilling today would be in effect 40 years from now. What tremor might there be or what consequence might occur to impact upon that system and to damage the quality of drinking water for our people? The cost and benefits to the communities are so small that one single incident would obliterate any dollars they have in any of their budget. So Congress is doing much more today than pass this. Congress begins the dialogue and debate on these types of issues.

So I wanted to make this point that every single community impacted upon by this decision was opposed to that drilling. I am strongly opposed. I thank the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), chairman, and the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ), the ranking member, for having supported the bill and hope that

they will help me all the way through to codify this into law and statute.

WHY A LEGISLATIVE REMEDY?

At this stage in the process the only way to stop what could be an environmental catastrophe is legislative action.

My bill, H.R. 2818 would bar any person from any drilling activity, including slant or directional drilling, to extract oil or gas from lands beneath Mosquito Creek Lake. The bill gives the U.S. Attorney General the authority to file suit in U.S. District Court to enforce the prohibition.

BACKGROUND ON THE LAKE

Mosquito Creek Lake is located in a heavily populated area, Trumbull County, Ohio. The county seat, Warren, located at the southern end of the lake, has a population of more than 50,000. Trumbull County has a total population of more than 225,000.

The lake was constructed in 1944 primarily for flood control, low-flow augmentation, municipal water supply, and water quality control. The lake also serves to conserve land and preserve fish and wildlife, including several endangered species.

THE LAKE IS MAIN SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER

Mosquito Creek Lake is the sole source of drinking water for the city of Warren. Let me repeat that: the lake is the sole source of drinking water for the city of Warren.

The city of Cortland also relies on the lake to recharge its aquifers. Surrounding communities also rely, in part, on the lake to supply their drinking water.

Any contamination of the lake would severely compromise the drinking water supply of up to a quarter of a million people. That is why I am here today.

ALL LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE OPPOSED

The four local governments that are impacted by this proposal, the cities of Cortland and Warren, Bazetta Township, and Trumbull County, all adamantly oppose the drilling.

Keep in mind that these governments will receive royalties from the drilling.

In addition, every civic, scientific and academic organization involved in the process has raised serious and substantive concerns relative to safety and the worth of the drilling proposal. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has ignored local concerns.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS LACK RESOURCES TO MONITOR AND RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES

The state of Ohio does not have the resources to effectively and consistently conduct inspections and monitor water quality.

BLM glosses over this issue by asserting that the state will somehow come up with the necessary resources or that the drillers themselves will hire outside contractors to do the monitoring and inspecting.

While I have great respect for the oil and gas drilling industry, inspection and water quality monitoring are functions that should not be entrusted to the private sector—especially when the private companies have a glaring conflict of interest.

Contrary to what BLM has stated in their planning analysis and environmental assessment (PA/EA) documents, the local governments do not have the necessary equipment, personnel, expertise and resources to adequately cope with a drilling accident.

BLM HAS NOT ADEQUATELY CONSULTED WITH STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS

Throughout the process BLM has not adequately consulted with state and local govern-

ments. For example, BLM did not adequately consult with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Given that the proposed drilling will affect the sole source of drinking water for more than a quarter of a million people, BLM should have made every effort to ensure that Ohio EPA played a central role at every step of the environmental assessment process.

Unfortunately, this was not done as evidenced by the fact that not a single individual from Ohio EPA was part of the team that prepared the proposed PA/EA.

BENEFITS VERSUS RISKS

Under a best case scenario, the local governments could receive a total of \$150,000 a year.

A single accident could shut down the drinking water supply for the cities of Warren and Cortland, and surrounding communities.

The planning and assessment documents prepared by BLM do not address the key issue of how or where these government entities would get safe drinking water.

A single accident could have devastating and lasting consequences.

NO PLACE TO TURN BUT CONGRESS

I, along with the local governments involved, have tried to work with BLM. Our concerns have been laid out in great detail. We have been involved in the planning and assessment process at every stage. We have done everything by the book.

The Congress is our last resort. I urge the House to approve H.R. 2818. Don't let the federal government impose a program on a community that the entire community does not want.

In closing, I'd like to quote from a 9/28/98 letter submitted to BLM by David D. Daugherty, assistant law director for the city of Warren, as part of the PA/EA process.

There is no gas shortage at present and even if there were, the relative small size of the potential gas resources under the reservoir would do little to solve any national energy crisis. The overall economic benefit to the area is slight while the potential for harm is great. Mitigation measures by their definition imply the possibility of harm; and while they may reduce the probability of harm the possibility still exists, particularly where the mitigation measures rely on questionable enforcement as well as disaster containment capabilities. If no action is taken the mitigation measures are unnecessary and the probability of a spill or other contamination from drilling under Federal lands is zero.

Mr. ROMERO-BARCELÓ. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. OSE). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2818.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MINERAL LEASING ACT AMENDMENTS REGARDING TRONA MINING

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 3063) to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to increase the maximum acreage of Federal leases for sodium that may be held by an entity in any one State, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3063

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

The Congress finds and declares that—

(1) The Federal lands contain commercial deposits of trona, with the world's largest body of this mineral located on such lands in southwestern Wyoming.

(2) Trona is mined on Federal lands through Federal sodium leases issued under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920.

(3) The primary product of trona mining is soda ash (sodium carbonate), a basic industrial chemical that is used for glass making and a variety of consumer products, including baking soda, detergents, and pharmaceuticals.

(4) The Mineral Leasing Act sets for each leaseable mineral limitations on the amount of acreage of Federal leases any one producer may hold in any one state or nationally.

(5) The present acreage limitation for Federal sodium (trona) leases has been in place for over five decades, since 1948, and is the oldest acreage limitation in the Mineral Leasing Act. Over this time frame Congress and/or the BLM has revised acreage limits for other minerals to meet the needs of the respective industries. Currently, the sodium lease acreage limitation of 15,360 acres per state is approximately one-third of the per state Federal lease acreage cap for coal (46,080 acres) and potassium (51,200 acres) and one-sixteenth that of oil and gas (246,080 acres).

(6) Three of the four trona producers in Wyoming are operating mines on Federal leaseholds that contain total acreage close to the sodium lease acreage ceiling.

(7) The same reasons that Congress cited in enacting increases in other minerals' per state lease acreage caps apply to trona: the advent of modern mine technology, changes in industry economics, greater global competition, and need to conserve the Federal resource.

(8) Existing trona mines require additional lease acreage to avoid premature closure, and are unable to relinquish mined-out areas to lease new acreage because those areas continue to be used for mine access, ventilation, and tailings disposal and may provide future opportunities for secondary recovery by solution mining.

(9) Existing trona producers are having to make long term business decisions affecting the type and amount of additional infrastructure investments based on the certainty that sufficient acreage of leaseable trona will be available for mining in the future.

(10) To maintain the vitality of the domestic trona industry and ensure the continued flow of valuable revenues to the Federal and state governments and products to the American public from trona production on Federal lands, the Mineral Leasing Act should be amended to increase the acreage limitation for Federal sodium leases.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT OF MINERAL LEASING ACT.

Paragraph (2) of subsection (b) of section 27 of the Mineral Leasing Act (41 Stat. 448; 30 U.S.C. 184(b)(2)) is amended by striking "fifteen thousand three hundred and sixty acres" and inserting "30,720 acres".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN) and the gentleman